

# The procedural and practical guide for Muslim burials

## **Governing:**

Bury Cemetery, St Peter's Road, Bury  
Radcliffe Cemetery, Cemetery Road, Radcliffe  
Ramsbottom Cemetery, Cemetery Road, Ramsbottom

## **Introduction**

In this booklet, you will find information about the following.

- Preparation of a grave (vaults)
- Lowering the deceased
- Covering the chamber
- Returning soil to the grave
- Out of hours burial (in a vault)
- Earth graves
- Timber vaults
- Help and assistance
- Health and safety risk assessment

This booklet is in addition to information that is available from our website at: [www.bury.gov.uk/bereavementservice](http://www.bury.gov.uk/bereavementservice)

which includes:

- information about Muslim burials;
- cemetery regulations;
- information about the Municipal Funeral Service; and
- Bury cemeteries' fees and charges.

## **Preparation of a grave (vaults)**

Graves are excavated by our gravediggers. The vaults are constructed of breeze block by a stone mason.

A plastic sheet is folded and placed inside the vault for use after the burial.

Concrete flag stones are placed over the vault

followed by a layer of plastic sheet and then a second row of concrete flag stones (staggered in relation to the first row of flag stones). This is done to stop water from entering the grave.

Top soil is then put back on the vault until the vault is required for a burial.

Prior to the burial, the gravediggers remove the top soil and concrete flagstones and place them to the side of the grave. The plastic sheet that was placed between the flagstones is removed.

The pre-folded plastic sheet that was placed inside the vault is also moved to the side of the grave along with two spades for later use.

If the plastic sheet is missing our gravediggers can supply a new sheet.

### **Arrival of the deceased**

It is important that the body of the deceased arrives at the grave by the specified time. If this time cannot be adhered to, the Cemetery Office should be informed.

Please note: Should cemetery staff have other work commitments attending other funerals, then the interment cannot be guaranteed to go ahead.

If the funeral is late the council reserves the right to postpone and rearrange for the next day

### **Lowering the deceased**

Where possible there should be a nominated Muslim

community representative present to ensure the smooth running of the burial should any issues arise.

The lowering of the coffin must take place in a controlled and dignified manner.

The gravediggers have a discreet presence at the burial to check that everything that is required is in place (including slings).

As it is not safe or sensible for anyone to enter the grave, the slings provided must be used to lower the coffin.

### **Covering the chamber**

Once the coffin has been lowered, the straps are removed and a row of concrete flagstones is placed over the vault.

This is followed by the plastic sheet and a second row of flagstones, which should ensure a water tight seal.

Please note: Concrete flagstones are heavy and can be awkward to move, particularly if they are wet and difficult to hold. Therefore, gloves should be worn and extreme care must be taken around the open vault.

The community representative will be issued with a risk assessment for this procedure, which must be adhered to at all times.

### **Returning the soil to the grave**

In a lot of cases, families and mourners prefer to return the soil to the grave themselves and spades will be

provided for this purpose. However, our gravediggers are available to assist or complete this task if required to do so.

**Please note:** Great care must be taken to ensure that families and mourners are not injured while returning soil to the grave as accidents and injuries can occur, particularly when too many people try to do this at the same time and get in each other's way. For this reason we recommend that only two people return the soil to the grave at any one time. We also recommend that suitable footwear is worn to prevent injuries to feet. Bare feet are not allowed under any circumstances.

The soil on the grave should be left mounded to allow it to settle.

### **After the ceremony**

Our gravediggers will tidy the grave area and remove excess soil.

### **Burials in a vault outside of normal working hours** (on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays)

Bury Council offers an out of hours burial service at weekends and on bank holidays when sufficient notice is given. To enable a funeral to take place on the same day we must be notified, and all paperwork must be completed at the Cemetery Office as soon as possible after booking the burial.

## **Please note:**

- You must obtain the legal certificate of burial before booking a funeral.
- All burials outside of normal working hours incur an additional charge. This is to help offset the extra costs to the council.

## **How to book a funeral outside of normal hours**

Phone Bury Council Emergency Services on 0161 253 6639 or 0161 253 6606.

**Please note:** In order to comply with health and safety regulations please be aware that funerals are not allowed to take place later than 4pm on any day in summer and no later than 3pm on any day in winter. This is to ensure that the vault is closed and all soil is returned to the grave during daylight hours.

## **Earthen graves**

Earthen graves can be provided. However, for health and safety requirements, the council gravediggers must be allowed to remove the shoring, complete the back filling and remove the grass matting.

It may be possible to provide an earthen grave for an out of hours burial providing sufficient notice is given.

## **Timber vaults**

Timber (wooden) vaults can be supplied. However, it may not be possible to arrange for this type of vault at short notice as it is not always possible to have the timber in stock and the correct staff available.

## **Help and assistance**

Help and assistance is available either at the Cemetery Office (telephone 0161 253 6510) or via a local funeral director. If you do need help and advice, please contact us and if necessary, you can arrange an interview with a member of staff at short notice.

Advice is also available from the mosque and your community representative.

Help and assistance is also available from the attending gravediggers or in the case of an emergency, please telephone Security services on 0161 253 6639/6606.

Further advice is available on our website at:  
[www.bury.gov.uk/bereavementservice](http://www.bury.gov.uk/bereavementservice)

Please note: In the event of severe weather, we reserve the right to cancel an interment if it considers that there are unacceptable hazards to the safety of members of the public and cemetery staff.

## **Health & safety risk assessment**

A risk assessment is available from the cemetery office.

